

3 WISDOM
JUSTIFIED
Of Her CHILDREN;
OR, TWO
SERMONS

Sometime Preached in *Cock-*
shutt Chappel, in the County of *Salop*,
and lately at *Brightling* in *Sussex*,
On MATTH. XI. XIX.

And now at the Request of Friends
Enlarged, and Published.

By WILLIAM GEARING
Minister of the Word.

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Unto His much Honoured Friends,

THOMAS COLLINS

OF

Socknerjh in the County of **SUSSEX.**

ROBERT CORBET

AND

THOMAS CORBET

OF

STANWARDINE in the County
of *SALOP*, Esquires.

And to the Vertuous Gentle-
women their Wives.

WILLIAM GEARING

Dedicateth this ensuing Discourse

AS

A Publique and Perpetual Testimonial
of his Cordial gratitude for their Great
Respects Manifested to him.

United States Marshal, Western District

THOMAS COLLINS

OF

County of the County of 3113 1113

ROBERT CORSET

AND

THOMAS CORSET

OF

STANFORD, N. Y. in the County

of 2113 1113

And to the Veterans Guards

Women their Wives

WILLIAM BERRY

Deceased this 1113 1113

AS

A Public and Perpetual Testimony

of his 1113 1113

WISDOM JUSTIFIED
OF HER
CHILDREN.

MATTH. II. 19.

*But Wisdom is justified of her
Children.*

CHAP. I.

IN this Parable we may see how far God intendeth the Salvation of wicked men, and notwithstanding man's stubborn perverseness against the salvation of his own soul, God useth all means for mans conversion, mercy and judgement, goodness and severity; and wicked men make ill constructions of Gods gracious dealings in matters concerning their own souls.

Let us open our Saviours-similitude, both shewing and aggravating the stubbornness of wicked men against him: our Saviour calleth for diligent attention, *vers. 15.* because he is speaking of some weighty matter which concerneth his hearers, he saith, *He that hath ears to hear let him hear.* As the ear is higher than the Tongue; So it is a greater dignity to hear

hear the wisdom of others, than to vent our own.

In the 16th verse our Saviour cries out, *But wherunto shall I liken this generation?* By Generation, here understand this kind of men, meaning the Scribes, Pharisees, and other stubborn Jews, who rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, *Luke 7. 29.* Gods Counsel and purpose is to save man by Christ, but they rejected the Counsel of God, and sought salvation by the righteousness of the Law: our Saviour answereth himself in the next words, *It is like unto Children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented:* here is the Comparison it self.

I. Some think this was a play among the *Hebrews*, invented for the instruction of Children in point of manners. Children were to divide themselves into two Companies; the one side were pleasant and Muscal, Piping and Dancing, as if they were Celebrating a Marriage-day: The other Company were Mourning, Singing sad Elegies and doleful Ditties, as those that Solemnized a sad Funeral of some departed Friend: and among these Children there were some Peevish and froward Mopes, that did Cross and hinder their play, nothing could give them content: when they were Piping and Dauncing, and making some Pleasant Pastime, they were not pleased with them, but were Peevish and Froward, crossing them in their Play. The end of this Pastime was to shew unto them.

1. The inconstancy and mutability of this world; how sometinnes men are in a pleasant condition, all things fall and go well with them, and then they Pipe and Dance for joy: anon they have cause to
mourn,

mourn, things go ill with them, then they weep and are sad — or

2. To shew the diverse condition of men in this world : some are altogether pursued with troubles in this life, and spend their days in Mourning and Weeping and daily Vexation : others are loaden with this worlds goods, and they spend their days in Mirth and Jollity. This is the opinion of some Expositors. But,

II. Others think there was no such play among the *Hebrew* Children, but that this is spoken here as an allusive supposition of such a Play among Children. As if Christ should have said, This generation is, as if Boys should Sing, Pipe and Daunce, Mourn and Weep, and some froward Children are not affected with them, do they what they can to please them.

In *vers.* 18. Our Saviour makes application of this to the stubborn Scribes and Pharisees, *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a Devil; the son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners,*

John came neither eating nor drinking.

1. John did not live an ordinary vulgar life, but an extraordinary, peculiar, austere kind of life; he separated himself from all humane society, he lived not in Towns and Cities, but in a solitary Desert.

2. His meat, drink, and apparel was different from others : he was not gaudy in his apparel; he wore not costly raiment, nor drank he wine out of Bowls, as those that are in Prince's Courts : but his Clothing was made of Camels hair, and he was girded with a Linnen-girdle, and his best cheer was Locusts and Wild honey.

3. *John's* Preaching was very harsh and severe; he was not a son of Consolation, but a Son of Thunder, crying out to the Pharisees and Sadduces, *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from wrath to come, &c.* Now the ax is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and cast into the fire, *Matt. 3. 7, 10.* If ye be fruitless hearers of the word, God will cut you down, and cast you into hell fire: if ye repent not, ye are damned, the wrath of God is coming upon you, there is no hope for you, *O Generation of Vipers!* In this *John* is compared to the Children that mourned. Now see what effect it wrought in the hearts of the Pharisees: did this generation lament at *John's* Preaching? No, his course of life, and manner of Preaching did not at all please them. They thought him to be a Mad-man, a Doctor of despair, a Damnation-preacher, sending all to hell to whom he preached; for *Though John came neither eating nor drinking, they say of him, he hath a Devil.* O the blasphemy and perverseness of these wicked miscreants! they thought so.

1. Either because his manner of living was so uncouth in solitary places, as men that were possessed with Devils would live in wildernesses, or among graves and burial-places——or,

2. Because the Scribes and Pharisees doubted whether *John* and his Doctrine were from God or the Devil; they perversly would say the worst——or,

3. Because he was so rigid and terrible in re-proving sin; he thundered against sin in his Sermons in such a manner, that they took him to be no other than a mad man.

The Son of man came eating and drinking.

Our Saviour compares himself to the Children that

that did pipe and dance, *vers. 19.* The Son of man came eating and drinking. (1) Christ's manner of life and conversation was a pleasant, sweet, familiar, ordinary course; so as not approving, hardning or heartening men in sin; he differed from *John* in these things.

1. Christ did not shun the Society of men; yea, not the worst kind of men among the Jews, even the Publicans and Sinners, he did eat and drink among them.

2. His food and apparel was as the ordinary sort of peoples was: he went to a feast at *Matthew's* house, and dined with *Simon* the Pharisee, he went also to a marriage at *Cana* in *Galilee*, at which feasts men are most merry.

3. Christ did much differ from *John* in his Preaching and reprovng sin. The Son of man was a Son of consolation, *I am come*, saith he, *to save sinners, to seek and save that which was lost.* Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. He came to preach mercy, righteousness and salvation, to allure, and with a gentle hand to draw men from sin to holiness; likewise in his reproofs he was more mild and sweet than *John* was, he had mild severity in his reprehensions: this was Christ's piping and dancing, his sweet and gracious way to win men to himself. But did the Scribes and Pharisees dance after Christ's pipe? See how blasphemously they miscalled him, they say, Behold a man gluttonous, a Wine-bibber a Friend of Publicans and sinners, (1) Such a one as did allow men in such riotous courses, a soothing flatterer of ungodly men; for so the word [*Friend*] is here to be understood, a Friend of Publicans and sinners.

C H A P. II.

From hence I shall draw divers conclusions.

1 **T**Hat Christ useth divers means, and worketh after divers manners to convert and save untoward, stubborn, perverse sinners; he pipeth and danceth, this is for mercy, he hath compassion on us under our miseries and sinful infirmities: he mourneth and lamenteth, and denounceth judgements against the obstinate sinner: sometimes he makes use of the whip of the Law, as Christ came into the Temple with Whip-cords: Sometimes he strives to allure and draw men with the cords of Love; he becometh all things to us; he doth apply himself as it were to the crooked conditions of stubborn sinners to draw them to himself.

2. Hence ye may note the variety of gifts in Ministers for the conversion and edification of men. Some are *Boanerges*, like *John Baptist*; some *Barnabas's*, like *Jesus*, and both for the Salvation of men's souls. As God did furnish *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* with skill and wisdom for the building of the material Temple, *Exod. 35. 30, &c.* So likewise in raising up Instruments for the service of his Church, he furnisheth men with diversities of gifts for the same, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

3. Note the horrible perverseness of men in making ill constructions of Gods using various means for their good: they disgrace the preaching of the Law, and abuse the preaching of the Gospel, and so by their own wilful corruption do more ensnare themselves in their infidelity and impenitency; therefore wicked men shall be their own judges, how just God is in their damnation, and they left inexcusable. I come now to the words of the Text. *But wisdom is*

justified

justified of her children. As if he should have said; neither *John's* mourning nor piping is altogether in vain, though the Scribes in their obstinacy reject the wisdom of God, and will neither dance nor mourn: Though wicked men stubbornly defame and disgrace Christ in his truth and ordinances, and bring up an evil report upon the ways of Religion and Holiness; yet there are some poor Publicans and sinners that dance after Christ's piping, and lament after *John's* mourning, such as receive and entertain wisdom, that stand for Religion, that justify God in his truths, and ordinances by faith and obedience, *wisdom is justified of her Children.*

CHAP. III. SECT. I.

The main conclusion which I shall draw from these words, and which I shall insist on, is this,

Observ. **T**Hat there are some that justify wisdom in the worst of times. Before I shew how they do thus justify wisdom, I must enquire,

1. *What is meant by Wisdom.*
2. *What by Justifying.*
3. *Who are the Children of Wisdom.*

I. We are to enquire what is here meant by Wisdom.

1. By wisdom some understand Divine Providence: it is confessed that the Wisdom of God is admirable in all his Providential Transactions: but no ground appeareth from the context, that this can be the meaning of Wisdom in this place.

2. By Wisdom some understand Christ himself, who is called *the Wisdom of the Father*, and in whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom, Colos. 2. 3. The Scribes and Pharisees looked upon Christ as an unlearned man, as a simple Carpenters Son: believers looked

looked on him as their treasure of Wisdom, they embraced him as the Messiah.

3. By wisdom some understand God's purpose and Counsel of saving man by Jesus Christ, and this is called the Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 2. 6. *Howbeit we speak Wisdom among them that are perfect, &c. We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory,* vers. 7. None but the Infinite Wisdom of God could find out this way for the Salvation of Man-kind.

4. Others by Wisdom understand true Religion, the external means of Salvation, and of Faith in Christ, as the Preaching of the Gospel, the use of the Sacraments, and all the ways and courses which God useth for the conversion of men to Christ, as the preaching of the Law, the preaching of the Gospel, &c. Some men are pleased in having the terrors of the Law preached to them, therefore he provideth a John to preach that, and he must mourn: others are pleased with the preaching of mercy, of Free-grace; therefore God sent his Son. Some are are pleased with an austere life, God therefore gave austerity of life to John: others again delight in popularity and familiar converse: Christ is very affable and familiar, God sets up mourning, set up dancing, and both to bring men to Repentance. That you may see this is the meaning of wisdom in this place consult, Luk. 7. 29. *And all the people that heard Christ, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, vers. 30. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him, They rejected תלמי בראי תהי, the Counsel of God determining to save by his Word and Ordinances: and then followeth this very Parable, and similitude mentioned before*

before my Text in *Matthew*. And the Lord said, *Wherunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto Children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept: for John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a Devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a Gluttonous man, and a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners: But Wisdom is justified of her Children.* The Scribes and Pharisees rejected the external means of salvation, counted the preaching of Christ foolishness, would not be baptized; but many Publicans and sinners repented at *John's* preaching, believed Christ and his Doctrine: so that the several ways that God taketh to bring men to Christ, is meant by wisdom in this place.

SECT. II.

II. We are to enquire what is meant by justifying? *Wisdom is justified, &c.*

1. *Justification* is taken sometimes for Commendation: *Wisdom is justified,* (1) It is highly admired, commended, praised. Godly men do highly commend and praise God in this way of Salvation through faith in Christ: the Saints do admire God's Wisdom in contriving such an effectual way of saving mankind: in contriving a means to satisfy offended justice by an infinite and plenary satisfaction, and yet manifest his Free-grace, Love and Mercy. Marvellous in the eyes of Saints is Gods Wisdom, Love, goodness, Justice, Mercy in Christ. The Pharisees slighted this Wisdom of God, called it Heresie, and the *Greeks* called it foolishness; but believers cry out, O the depth of God's Wisdom in the Gospel!

2. Others

2. Others understand the word [*justified*] thus, it is *received* by the godly, and approved as the only safe way to salvation. No other *Jacob's* ladder to climb up into the third heaven by, nor door to truth, life and righteousness, but Jesus Christ set forth in the Gospel. Believers do with joy dance after Christs piping, and lament when *John* mourneth, though the wicked Pharisees reject Christs righteousness, and the preaching of the Gospel, as things unable to salvation.

3. To be justified is to be *cleared* from all false imputations: what blasphemous imputations did the malicious Pharisees lay and fasten upon Christ? A Wine-bibber, a Glutton, a Friend of Publicans and sinners, a *Samaritan*, a Devil, an ignorant Carpenters son. So *Chrysostome* and others do interpret the words thus: seeing the Wisdom of God trieth all ways, and neglecteth no means conducing to the conversion of sinners, he trieth by mourning, trieth by dancing, he trieth by preaching terror, he trieth by preaching free grace and mercy, he trieth by love, he trieth by severity; he trieth by promises, by threatenings, by denouncing woes and curses, and yet men remain obstinate and impenitent Rebels against the Counsel of God: the wisdom of God is now justified, (i) Is absolved, is altogether excusable, and free from their detractions and false imputations, their eternal perishing is from their own stubbornness. So to this very day, how do profane men lay upon Religion, and the holiness of Christ shining in the conversations of the godly, false, bitter, and scandalous crimes and imputations? yet true believers do free Christ, Religion and Holiness from these calumniationes. Though they account Religion to be a Moopish and Foellish thing,

thing; and call holiness preciseness, indiscretion, overmuch strictness, yet the godly will justify Religion to be an excellent thing, and say that *Wisdom is the principal thing*, Prov. 4. 7. Though the Pharisees disgrace Christ, and call him the Carpenters son, yet *Peter* will justify him to be *the Son of the living God*: They call him Glutton, Wine-bibber, Devil, but the Saints will justify him to be the holy One of God, the Lamb of God without spot, to be undefiled, separate from sinners, to be the God of Gods, and King of Kings.

4. To justify in our common phrase, is to maintain what a man speaks or doth; A man useth to say, I will justify my words and actions: so godly men will plead for wisdom, stand to Christ and his ways, and will maintain Religion against all oppositions, and contradictions.

S E C T. III.

3. Who are meant by the children of wisdom?

It is an Hebraism: by children of wisdom are meant wise men, godly men. As in Scripture by children of disobedience are meant disobedient persons, wicked and ungodly men; so by children of wisdom, those that are truly wise, every godly man, every man in Christ will justify the wisdom of God in Christ, justify Religion, justify God in his ordinances, truth and holiness.

This point may be strongly proved from Scripture. See with what an undaunted courage *Peter* and *John* did justify Christ before all the *Jews*, both Rulers and people, who had charged them not to mention the name of Christ, *Act. 4. 10, 11, 12.* *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye Crucified, whom*

whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the Corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, and vers. 20. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. We are Resolved to do it, we cannot but do it. The profession of Christ and his Gospel was accounted Heresie, and believers were accounted factious and schismatical, yet S. Paul would justify it to be the only way and worship of God: for thus saith he to Felix; *Act. 24. 14. after the way which they call Heresie, worship I the God of my Fathers.* What holy resolution had the three noble children in the cause of God's worship: A stately Idol is advanced by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and All are commanded to worship this dead stock, solemn Proclamation is made to this purpose: hereupon come in a company of Informers, such as are ready on all occasions to do the Devil service; they come and accuse the Jews, *vers. 9.* They come in a flattering way, *O King live for ever,* and *vers. 12. There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the Province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; These men O King, have not regarded thee, they serve not thy Gods, nor worship the golden Image which thou hast set up.* As who should say, under correction, your Majesty is mistaken in setting these men in such an eminent place, and they are very unthankful for this preferment: *These men O King, regard not thee, nor worship thy Gods.* Hereupon they are called to examination, and the King himself takes cognizance of the cause, *vers. 13.* Then *Nebuchadnezzar* in his rage and fury (which is no fit qualification for a Judge or Ruler) calleth for them

them to be brought before him; and then puts them to interrogatories, *vers. 14.* *Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego? Do ye not serve my Gods, &c. Now if ye be ready, that, at what time ye hear the sound of the Cornet, Lute, Harp, &c. ye fall down and worship the Image that I have made, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a fiery furnace: and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand? Martial Law! He speaks thus in effect, Have you any God greater than my Gods? and seemeth to rely more upon his own strength than upon the strength of his Gods: therefore he saith, who shall deliver you out of my hand? he was puffed up with his many great victories, that he is forgetful both of God and man. But see their answer, v. 16. 17. They answered and said to the King, O King we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace: and he will deliver us out of thy hand O King, but if not, be it known unto thee O King, we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship thy golden Image which thou hast set up: as if they had said, we know the worst of it, it is death, and we are not solicitous to avoid the penalty of this Law, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter: this is the preface or *exordium*. The substance of their answer consisteth in two things. 1. Their submission to the will of God for their deliverance from the fiery furnace, wherein they assert the power of God, who was able to do it, *vers. 17.* In answer to the King, who said, who is able to deliver out of my hand? If it be so. 2. Their full resolution, notwithstanding, though God in his wisdom should see it meet not to deliver them, yet to keep close to God, not to fall into so fowl a sin, though they were thrown into a fiery furnace. *Be it known unto thee, O King, we**

will not Worship thy Gods, &c. So Daniel would justify God in his Worship in the most stormy times, who with a most holy resolution opposed the Kings Decree, the malice of the Nobles, and the severity of the Kings punishment, all these could not draw him from praying to his God, *Dan. 6. 10.* When there was great dispute who Christ should be, and some said, John Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, others one of the Old Prophets, Peter resolves the doubt, *Thou art Christ, the son of the living God, Matth. 16. 14, 16.* As men at this day: some say the holiness of Christ is niceness; others preciseness, others faction; others Singularity: but what do the children of wisdom say? it is the life of the Son of God.

CHAP. IV.

In the prosecution of this point I will first shew how men are said to justify wisdom.

I. **L**et us consider how we justify God in Christ, take it in that acception.

1. When we adore, and to astonishment admire the unsearchable wisdom of God, in the contrivance of the way of Salvation in and by Christ, discovered in the gospel. Gods wisdom is admirable in all his works, in his creatures, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all! Psal 104. 24.* In the formation of man in the womb of his mother, in all his providential courses there are unsearchable depths of wisdom: but now in contriving of mans Salvation by Christ, this is the choicest part of Gods wisdom: the Apostle cries, *O the depth!* S. Paul cries out, *Great is the Mystery of Godliness,* *manifest in the flesh, &c.* The Angels admire this manifold wisdom of God, they desire to peep or pry into it, *1 Pet. 1. 12.* None but infinite

finite wisdom could find out such a course as could *non plus* men and Angels; a way for the satisfaction of infinite justice, and yet for the glorifying of infinite mercy: here is infinite merit, yet infinite free-grace.

2. We justify Christ the wisdom of the Father, when we take him to be *the Lord our Righteousness*, denying the best things in our selves. Herein the Pharisees and moral men reject Christ, and the children of wisdom embrace him. S. Paul by his own confession, *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* was a Singular Pharisee, *touching the righteousness of the Law blameless*: yet he willingly threw away the mantle of his legal obedience, and wrapt himself up in the garments of Christs righteousness. Christ without good works justifies believers, the righteousness which is by faith, not that which is by the Law. A man trusting to his good works, is like a naked body wrapt up in a net, where every one may plainly see his Nakedness. God seeth the nakedness of Pharisees through their praying and fasting, and Almsgiving: to trust to any thing but to God in Christ, is to deny, not to justify wisdom; it is to patch up salvation, to put an old piece to new garments, and so make the rent the worse. How many ways do Papists reject, not justify Christ? all their distinctions cannot save it: to run to other sacrifices, and not to rest in Christs Sacrifice, this is not to justify Christ: to run to the Saints, and not to Christ, is not to justify Christ, but to deny him to be the only Mediatour to Intercession: to make a conjunction between Christs merits and ours, that he must do a part, and we must merit the rest, this is not to justify Christ as a perfect Redeemer; this is to deny Christ to be the only way to life eternal, and the only door at which the righteous enter in; We may joyn to these, moral

men, that content themselves with a negative holiness, and empty heartless duties, who have (as *Luther* speaks) a Pope in their belly, and go no farther for Righteousness and Salvation than their own duties: this is to deny Christ, not to justify him; such men make a Christ of all their performances, of their outward restrained holiness, and (put all together) make a justifying Christ of these menstruous raggs. But the children of Wisdom cry out, None but Christs Righteousness. As the spirit answered the Exorcists commanding them to come forth, *Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?* *Act. 19. 15.* So do all the children of wisdom say in point of justification, *Jesus I know, and his righteousness I know, but as for duties, good works and merits, who are ye?* Remember this, that our Saviour only, not our obedience, can enable us to stand before the justice of God: the Children of Wisdom cry out to Christ, *To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.*

3. VVhen we yield to Christ our entire obedience, this is to justify VVisdom: VVe then justify him to be a King, and set him upon the throne of *David* his Father, as it is *Psal. 2. 12. Kiss the son, lest he be angry:* by our submissive Kisse of Faith, Obedience and Love, we acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, and King of his people. VVhen Great Emperours and Noble Kings held Popes Styrrups, and kissed the Popes Feet in token of Obedience unto his Unholy Holiness, they then Professed Obedience to Anti-christ, and exalted him in the place of God. Then do we set up Christ in his own place, when Kings, Elders and People, do cast down their Crowns before the throne, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, and Glory, and Power, Rev.*

4. 12. There are two things in it, first, their professed Subjection to Christ, in ascribing to him his tribute of Glory and Honour. 2. Their justification of Christ, Thou art worthy O Lord, of all Glory, &c. This is more than the Pharisees would do, they would not kiss the Son of God, but blasphemed him, opposed him, and derided at him. The Jews made him a King but it was in mockery, when they put upon him a purple robe, and a reed into his hand; neither would they throw down their righteousness before him, thinking Christ not worthy of their tribute. So unto this day, all impenitent sinners do rebel against the Crown and Dignity of Jesus Christ, they will not Subject themselves to Christ's Scepter, and the Government of his Spirit according to his word, they will be lawless, and live as they list, they will not vouchsafe to throw down the weapons of Sin, Pride, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, &c. and their stubborn wills and unruly affections; Jesus Christ in the judgement of an ungodly world is not worthy of these things; so all ungodly men do deny to justify Christ the King of Kings. The Centurions Servants justify and acknowledged him their Lord by their willing obedience to his quick commands, when he said come, they come; go, they go, do this, and they do it: So the Children of wisdom do justify Christ in yielding cheerful obedience to him in all his commands: when he saith do this or that duty, they do it: when he saith, Abstain from this or that sin, no temptation can easily withdraw them. Thus the Spirit of Christ is the *intelligentia movens*, as *Aristotle* speaks of Angels, whirling about the Sphere of their daily conversation. When we obey Christ, we put a Kingly Crown upon his head, in suffering him to rule us; to subdue our hearts unto

him, and do not cherish any contrary motions to his Spirit, when we will not go against his Spirit, and his Word, as *Balaam* said to *Balak*, Though he would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the Commandment of my God, to do less or more.

CHAP. V.

II. Let us consider Wisdom in another acception, understanding thereby Holiness, Religion: the truths and Ordinances of Christ, and so the Children of Wisdom do justify Wisdom.

WHEN their love to Religion, Truth and Holiness brings them out of love with the world, when their embracement of these things divorceth their hearts from all outward things for Christ and for his Truth and Religion-sake. By our Self-denial we justify wisdom to be the principal thing, to be more worth than all the world, to be better than Riches, Honours, the Favours of great Persons, Pleasures, and all worldly preferments, that Christ is the only gain, accounting all these things below to be but dross and dung. When the Children of Wisdom can willingly suffer the loss of Riches, Liberty, Preferment, Life and all they have for Religion, for Christ, for a good cause and a good conscience, then do they justify to all the world that these things are dearer to them than their own lives, our sufferings for Religion is our Magnifying of it; to be condemned for righteousness sake is to justify righteousness: suffering Christians are the Honour of Religion, and the glory of Christ. Thus *Moses* justified wisdom; he parted with the best things that *Egypt* could give, and contented himself with the worst condition of the

Israel-

Israelites: this sheweth that he justified Christ to be better, yea, the sufferings and reproaches of Christ to be better than all the treasures of *Egypt*. The Pharisees would not thus justify Christ; self-denial, and their popular outward Pharisaical holiness could not stand together: it is said of them that *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*, and so would not be Disciples of Christ, as if it had been dishonourable for them: as *Salvian* in his time complained long ago, *Siquis ex nobilitate conversi ad deum coeperit, statim honorem nobilitatis amitteret*: Religion makes men ignoble, and base in the worlds eye. So again it is spoken of the Pharisees, that they durst not openly to profess Christ, lest they were cast out of the Synagogue, they durst not justify Christ. So still, in all generations too many earthly men do justify and have applauded the world above Religion and Holiness, but yet still wisdom hath been justified of all her Children.

2. When we stick to Religion, to the Worship and Service of God, then do we justify wisdom: when we resolve to serve God in his own way; let all commands and threats affront us, yet then will we stick to Gods testimonies, and to the pure worship of God. Thus *Daniel* stuck to Gods Service against the decree of the King that contained a moneths Atheism in it. *Dan. 6. 7*. He had rather be torn asunder with a whole Den of Lions, than be drawn to worship a man in stead of God: he would pray three times in a day to his God, though the King, whose Favourite he was, would cast him out of favour, and all the Princes and Presidents sought thereby to ensnare him. Though the wicked mock such as hear the word, pray, and perform all the parts of Gods worship more frequently than themselves, yet the Children

dren of wisdom will justify it; rejoicing as the Psalmist speaks of the Sun, to run their course daily of Gods Service: the children of wisdom are not like some Seamen, that boast they can sail with all winds; they can do nothing against the truth, they like wisdom best, though it doth not always serve their own ends and occasions, they hold on in the way of Religion, as a Traveller riding in earnest business, that must go on in his way, whether fair or foul, in company or alone: go they must, yea, run whom Christ draweth; and in that way they fear no Lions, nor to be slain in the Streets, because they hold it needful that they go, not needful that they live: and when the Children of this world are resolved to be nothing, but what they are ready not to be, that they may be fitter for those in high places, whose persons they have in admiration for advantage sake, the Children of wisdom do abhor all inconstancy in Religion, or any thing which may argue the least unfaithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince and Captain of their Salvation: Religion is as a garment which covereth them, and for a girdle wherewith they are girded continually. To the Children of the world; Religion is as the Philacteries, upon the skirts of their garments, but far from their heart, but to the *Children of Wisdom*, it is (as the Corinthians to Paul) *In the heart to live and die together.*

3. We justify wisdom when as the *Children of Wisdom* do justify one another, by loving one another for their graces and holiness, by standing for them, when the wicked by opposition or disgrace do labour to beat them down: when we make much of them, when the world trampleth upon them, and looketh upon them as the filth and off-scouring of the
the

the world, we justify wisdom: they are beloved of us, because they are beloved of Christ; we honour them, because they honour God; we stick to them, because they stick to God; we rejoyce in them because of the graces of God in their hearts and lives. This is to justify God his image, his holiness, to justify Christ in his members: in owning them we own Christ, as it was said of *Lot*, in entertaining of strangers, he entertained Angels into his house; so in loving, honouring, delighting in Gods people for holiness sake, we do it to Christ himself. When men are ashamed of *Paul* the Prisoner of Christ, when men regard not holiness, nor esteem of men for their spiritual worth, but deal with them as the malicious Pharisees with Christs Disciples, cast them out of their Synagogues for believing in Christ, this is not to justify, but to condemn and deny Christ in his members. *Scaliger* tells us of a tree, unto which when a man cometh, *ramos constringit*, it closeth her leaves and branches, but when he departeth *ramos pandit*, then it openeth her leaves and branches. Many men are like this tree; when godly men who have the reproach of Christ upon them, come neer them, and do desire their favour and help, and their conditions be made known to them, they shrink up themselves, and are inwardly vexed, counting it a disgrace to have such come neer them, but when they are gone, they begin to be pleasant. *This is an adulterous generation, that are afraid to justify Christ in his members*, so would they do even to Christ himself.

4. We justify wisdom, when we live according to the Power and Purity of that Religion we Profess, when our lives are a Grace or Ornament to Religion, when we live according to those things we

we believe, and make open profession to the world we do believe them, we profess our selves to be the members of Christ, let us justify Christ our Head by our obedience to him: we profess our selves the Spouse of Christ, let our conversations justify Christ our Husband; we profess our selves the Sons of God, let us justify him to be our Father in all Holiness and Purity, his Image in us must justify it. We profess Religion, let us justify Religion by expressing the Power of it in our lives and conversations, that we may clear Religion from the false imputations and slanders, which the enemies of Religion and godliness cast upon it. You know how apt the world is to blame Religion; they are ready to say, and do say, none are worse than Professours of Religion, their Religion is nothing but words and shews, and empty forms, we had rather deal with Papists, or with any other than with these men, they are so unconscionable: the world is full of those slanders: let us justify our Religion by walking as becometh the Gospel. It is not our duties that do so much justify Religion, but it is our holy, just, pure, unblameable and fruitful conversation, this justifies our Religion, and Christ by it: this makes men to Justifie us, and say, God is in them of a truth: it makes the Christian Religion lovely and beautiful even in the eyes of the profane. If our Religion be only in words, in duties, in outward forms, we condemn Religion, and condemn Christ, and Justifie the slanders which the wicked Rabbie do cast upon the profession of Christianity.

5. We justify wisdom in justifying God in all his Divine truths in his commands, by pure and entire obedience to all as well as to any one command: we condemn God in disobeying but one command in his

his promises, by cleaving to God, even then when to present sense Gods Providences seem to cross his promises; we justify Gods faithfulness and truth in his word, — in his threatenings, when we tremble at his word; we justify Gods justice in truths concerning hell, when we leave such courses as hurry men thither: we justify God in truths concerning heaven, by setting our faces, hearts and courses upon and toward heaven; in his truth concerning the day of judgement, by loving, and looking for the appearing of Christ, when in all these we live as men that do believe there is an heaven and hell, death and judgement to come; but the children of disobedience do belye God in these things.

C H A P. VI.

Moreover, the Children of wisdom do justify wisdom in the worst of times: the children of this world take Religion to farm, they will be tenants at their own will, not at their Lord's; they will hold it no longer than themselves please, and throw up all in a bad year, and when they think their bargain too hard, they lay the key under the door, go their way, and leave their Lord to go look his rent; *when persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended, and in time of such temptation they fall away*, Matth. 13. 21. But to the children of wisdom, Religion is their Free-hold, their Fee-simple, a purchase bought even of Christ himself, who hath a good title, and will not deceive the purchaser: but though in the opinion of a worldling he sells dear, yet such a penny worth as he that knows the worth of it, will part with all that he hath for it, rather than go without it. When Christ and Reli-
gion

gion are in a triumphing posture, then will worldly professors take branches of Palm-trees, and go forth to meet Christ, and with the multitude, cry *Hosanna to the son of David, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest*; but if once they find Christ to be apprehended, and led away to the High-priests Palace, and there to be spit on in his face and buffeted, they will with *Peter* deny him, and say we know not the man, and if th's be not enough they will bind it with an oath, that the world may be satisfied they are none of his company: but the children of wisdom *do receive the Gospel with much affliction*: If the Gospel be in a suffering condition, they will be *partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God*, 2 Tim. 1. 8. when they took up Religion, they were resolved that some trouble would meet them in that way, and will now stick to it, though they lose all that they have for it. The Religion of worldlings is as the dew, which is but *sudor terre*, the earths cold sweat, that is soon licked up; the Religion of the true Christian is as rain from heaven, that sticks by the earth; the one wets not a fleece, the other watereth the ground: the one serveth only for frogs, snails, and Grasshoppers; the other soketh the root, and maketh it to bring forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, and receiveth a blessing from God, *Heb. 6. 7.*

C H A P. VII.

The Reasons of the point.

TAKING wisdom for Gods way of Salvation in and through Christ, there is great wisdom to justify this.

Reas.

Reas. 1. Because the only wise God hath thought this to be the only way and means of Salvation: The way of God is of all ways the most justifiable; in the wisdom of God there is not the least shadow of folly: Gods wisdom, yea the whole glory of God cannot appear in any way more than in the work of Redemption in and by Christ. Is not this unconceivable wisdom to contrive a way how an Infinite God should become a finite Creature, how he that was an Immortal God, should become a mortal man; how an eternal God should become a Child of an hour old; a blessed God become a curse; a most holy God should have a world of sins imputed to him, and die for the eternal salvation of sinful man: how offended justice should be satisfied, yet infinite mercy be fully shewn. All this is manifested in Christ; this must needs be the plot of the only wise God, contrived within the breast of the Ancient of days. Had Angels and men been assembled to contrive a way of Salvation, they would have tortured themselves with poor plots, and would never have thought of such a full, *adequate, infinite* way of Salvation as this. Godly men have eyes to pry into this glorious mystery of godliness, therefore with all acceptance and admiration do justify it. Pharisees and other carnal wicked men are blind, and so do not justify the wisdom of God in Christ.

2. Because wisdom's children do clearly apprehend an absolute impossibility of Salvation by any other means without Christ: every broken heart that hath a real sight and sense of sin as the greatest evil, will see there is no hope of salvation in himself: all that he can do to merit life and glory is nothing: his best things, parts, duties, moral vertues, and natural perfections, are meer nothings, are dross, dung, men-
struous

struous clothes, fig-leaves, they see all that they can suffer to satisfy offended justice is nothing; it is not so much as the payment of a farthing for the debt of a thousand pounds: sin being of an infinite nature, is of infinite demerit; and infinite satisfaction must be made, which no finite Creature can do: they see the suffering of the torments in hell to eternitie cannot satisfy, those that are already cast into prison, cannot satisfy the utmost farthing: so again, they see there is nothing in them can move and encline God to mercy without Christ: of themselves they are nothing but children of disobedience, masses of sin, sinks of corruption, a very hell, as the Martyr called himself. These real and thorow apprehensions of their condition, and extreme inability of getting salvation from themselves doth force them to justify God in Christ, and his way of saving them in and through Christ: the soul saith, there is no name under heaven by which I can be saved but by Christ: there are infinite merits, infinite righteousness in him; there is no thing in Christ but is lovely in Gods eye, and moving him to mercy. I will go out of my self, and rest upon Christ; I will take him for my only Saviour, for the Lord my Righteousness; from him alone will I draw my life, my righteousness, my salvation, and if I perish, I perish, I will cling close unto him, I do allow of no Saviour but him; miserable Saviours are all my duties, legal righteousness, moral perfections, only Christ hath fulfilled all righteousness, only Christ hath satisfied, I justify him to be my only Saviour; It is the sense and sight of Christs worth, excellency and necessity, makes the children of wisdom to justify Christ Jesus: Pharisees and Carnal men are void of both.

3. It is great equity the children of wisdom should
justify

justify wisdom; for Christ came to justify them, to take off all accusations which the Devil layeth to their charge: all that he did is to justify them; he became man, became a curse, was subject to death to justify them: he rose again for their justification: he intercedeth at the right hand of God to justify them; his merits, his graces all are for their justification: he was accused, condemned, executed to justify them, besides the unsearchable treasure of his mercy, the unvaluable priviledges derived from him to them. O ye children of wisdom! do your sins accuse you? Christ justifies you. Do your sins cry vengeance, vengeance? his blood cries mercy, mercy. So Devils accuse you day and night before God, and plead hard against you for your destruction, Christ justifieth you, and rebuketh that accuser of the brethren. When your consciences vex you with accusing and condemning thoughts, Christ justifies you, purifies and pacifieth your consciences: your duties and performances at the best are full of imperfections, much corruption and defilement adhereth to the best works of the best men, Christ fills them up with his righteousness, and so makes them well-pleasing, and acceptable works and performances unto God. Furthermore, remember how one day Christ will justify all his members before men, Angels, and Devils, and wipe off all those aspersions that have been cast upon the children of wisdom for godliness sake, as faction, pride, singularity, hypocrisie: Christ will then free godliness and godly men from these calumnies and aspersions, and he will make men know to their shame and sorrow, it was Religion, godliness and holiness the very wisdom of God himself, which they branded with such ignominious titles: if these things make any deep impression up-

on your souls, you will be enforced to justify God's wisdom in Christ Jesus.

4. Another reason is drawn from God's end in saving man by Christ, which is, that men should magnifie his wisdom, his love, his goodness in contriving such an infinitely perfect way for salvation by Christ. God himself justified Christ when he glorified him: Christ justified himself, when he was justified in the Spirit, that is, the Divine Nature of Christ justified the Humane Nature, which was perfectly united to his Divine. The Prophets, Apostles, Angels and Saints do justify Christ: All heaven do justify him, when they throw down their Crowns, and give all honour, power and glory unto him. We justify Christ, set him up, magnifie God in him, when we make him our righteousness, and by faith lay hold upon him, and stick close unto him. God loseth the glory of his wisdom and mercy, and Christ loseth the glory of his love, when men reject him, as if God's wisdom were folly and weakness, as if Christ were not able to save to the uttermost: in rejecting Christ and his righteousness, we do frustrate God of his gracious end.

C H A P. VIII.

II. I now come to the other acception of wisdom, and will give you reasons why Godly men ought to justify Religion and Holiness and all the ways of God.

Reas. 1. **B**ECAUSE God fully possesseth the hearts and minds of the children of wisdom, with the reality, excellency and blessedness of that religion, truth and holiness, which makes them stand up for wisdom. The judgements of the godly are enlightned with more high, heavenly, and super-excellent

excellent truths of God than other men: the secrets of Gods counsels, of Gods Kingdom; the mystery of godliness is manifested to them; they behold the Glory and Majesty of God Shining in the Truth and Purity of Religion; they know the infinite consequence of the things of Eternity, the blissful reward of Holiness; how dear every tittle of truth is to God; they foresee the dangerous effects upon such as start aside from the way of truth, Religion and heavenly wisdom: this keepeth and engageth their hearts to follow God, and to hold to his truth, and to justify his ways. Why are men so fearful in a good cause for a good God? It is because the truths of God are not so deeply rooted in their hearts, they are not soundly principled in these things. If cloth be not well wrought in the Loom at first, though it shew fair in the Loom, it will shrink much when it cometh to the wetting. The cause why many shrink in the wetting in time of suffering, is because their hearts were not well wrought, at first, not fully possessed with the excellency of true Religion, and heavenly wisdom.

2. Because there is nothing in wisdom, in true Religion, but what is justifiable. Therefore let us see what Religion is. Religion is that form and rule by which God hath taught us how to know him, and serve him. 1. How to know him: Religion is the knowledge of God, and in this knowledge of God eternal life doth consist, saith our Saviour, *John* 17. 3. Indeed we can never serve him rightly, If we do not know him rightly; service is a fruit of love, *S. Augustine* saith, *Sciri aliquid aut credi potest, & tamen non diligi; Diligi autem, quod neq; scitur neq; creditur, non potest.* We may know or believe a thing, yet not love it, but we cannot love that thing which is nei-

ther known nor believed by us. — 2. As Religion teacheth us to know God, so likewise how to serve him. And this same service that it teacheth, partly it concerns his own worship in duties of piety, partly of conversation with men in duties of equity and mercy. Gods worship is a main duty that Religion teacheth: it teacheth both whom to worship, and how to worship: it sheweth us both the true God, and the true way how to serve him. Some worship the false god for the true. *S. Paul* saith of the Gentiles, that instead of the Creatour, they gave glory to the Creature, *Rom. i. 25*. Many that worship the true God, worship him in a false manner, for they follow not his rules, but their own inventions: we must not only, *verum Deum colere, sed vero cultu colere*, worship the true God, but also worship him in a right manner. If otherwise, it may either be said of us, as our Saviour to the *Sycharitish* woman, *you worship you know not what*; or as to the Scribes and Pharisees, *you worship you know not how*; teaching for Doctrines mens Traditions: Religion teacheth both whom to worship, and how to worship. Again, as it is a Rule for Gods worship in duties of piety; so for our conversation among men in duties of justice and mercy. Religion were no Religion, if it taught not this too; if it taught not justice as well as holiness; Charity as well as devotion, *Diliges Deum, Thou shalt love the Lord*, that is the first & the greatest precept that it giveth; but yet *diliges proximum* too, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*; this second, saith our Saviour, is like unto the former, for the precepts must needs be like, because the objects be alike. Man was made in the likeness of God, therefore the precept we have to love man, must needs be like the precept we have to love God: they be so like, saith

S. John

S. John, as the one of them cannot consist without the other. 1 John 4. 20. Gregory saith well, *Sicut per amorem Dei amor proximi gignitur; sic & per amorem proximi amor Dei nutritur.* As the love of God begets the love of our Neighbour; so also by the love of our Neighbour is the love of God nourished.

Religion teaching all this, it must needs be an Art worth the Learning: an Art indeed, So Du Plessis calleth it, *Ars saluam facendi hominem*; the Art of saving mens souls. All the Arts in the world are not able to teach this. There hath been a strife among the Artists, as there was sometime among the Disciples, which should be the greatest among them, to which of them priority and preheminance should be given. Lactantius saith, it was so among the Philosophers, and Oratours of Greece, but the Philosophers got the preheminance, because they were generally reputed, *Animalia sapientie*, wisdom's creatures. Oratours only taught *artem bene dicendi*, the art of speaking well; Philosophers *artem bene vivendi*, the art of living well: and this must needs be more excellent than the other, *quoniam bene dicere ad paucos pertinet, bene vivere ad omnes*, because to speak well belongeth to a few, to live well pertaineth to all, and that was it Philosophy professed. But what Philosophy falsely vendicated, Religion may justly challenge; for Religion is indeed that Art that teacheth to live well. He liveth well, that liveth ever, and that Religion teacheth; it teacheth such a way of living here, as will afterward bring us to live forever: the way to everlasting salvation is taught and troden out to us in the precepts of Religion; seeing none of all the other Arts can teach this, this is more excellent, and more worth learning than all. Moreover, Re-

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ligion do h not only teach us to live thus, but tye us
 to live thus, And so much the very Notation of the
 word will give; it is called *Religio*, à *religando*, saith
Lactantius, which signifieth to bind again, *quod homi-*
nem sibi Deus ligaverit, & quasi pietate constrinxerit;
 because by Religion, as by a bond, God doth as it
 were bind and tye us to himself. Religion then you
 see, is of a binding nature, it doth not only teach but
 tye; tyes us to do by practice, what it teacheth us to
 do by precept. Now Gods Religion is an holy,
 pure, and undefiled Religion, as the Apostle saith of
 the Law, the Law is holy, just and good: So Reli-
 gion hath nothing in it but what is good even for us,
 and what is holy and just; in every precept of Re-
 ligion there is equity and goodness. *The ways of wis-*
dom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: god-
 liness is profitable in this life, and in the life to
 come: it is Religion makes a people happy and
 flourishing; why then should we be ashamed of it?
 What ashamed of holiness, of goodness, of truth, of
 blessedness? *What have men to shew for heaven but his*
truth? What treasure doth God betrust his Church
 withal but his truth, which he esteemeth dearer than
 heaven and earth? What is the way to heaven but
 holiness? Now shall we expect that Gods ways
 should be mercy and truth, if his truth be not em-
 braced, and his holiness not followed after? What
 doth the Lord require of man but to do justly, and to
 give to God and men their due? This the Children
 of Wisdom behold in Wisdom, and therefore will
 justify it. I know not through what Spectacles the
 world looketh upon Religion, and holiness, that
 they so slightly esteem it, as unpleasant, and unpro-
 fitable. If there were folly in Wisdom; if any thing
 unworthy a mans praise, imitation, love and liking,
 there

there were some shew of Shrinking from it: but who can charge the wisdom of God with folly? who can espy spots or darkness in the Sun? who can espy blame in Gods holiness, or errour in his most glorious truth? The *Ephesians* could stand for their *Diana*, the *Philistines* for *Baal zebub* the God of *Eckron*, wicked men can stand for their Lusts, Worldlings for Mammon, Hereticks can stand for their Errours; and shall God have none in all the world to stand for him, and justifie heavenly Wisdom?

C H A P. IX.

Use 1. **T**He first use of this point may be for terrour to all Pharisaical and other profane persons, who condemn the wisdom of God himself, preferring their own folly, their Lusts and ways above the wisdom of the only wise God, their own righteousness above the righteousness of Christ himself. Was there ever such an impiety heard of, that men should sit like Judges, and condemn God the just Judge of all the world, Christ the merciful Saviour, the Holiness and Religion of Christ, Innocence it self? Here I will shew how moral and profane men do condemn wisdom.

1. When men justifie themselves by their good works, their civility, their legal righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees were the Peevish Children that would neither dance nor mourn after *John* and Christ: these did, and all Moral men do condemn the wisdom of God in saving man by the righteousness of Jesus Christ; this is to depose Christ, and to set the Crown of Salvation upon their heads, making themselves their own Saviours; their menstruous clothes more glorious than the Robe of Christs

righteousness, their fig-leaves more than the garments of salvation, which God hath made for them, and put Christ out of his Office, making a Christ of themselves; what blasphemy is it of the Papists, who place the Virgin *Mary* above Christ, and most blasphemously pray to her to command her Son to do this or that for them? Thou Mother of God, command thy Son to hear me. There is the like blasphemy found in the hearts of all civil moral men; they do place their righteousness above Christs righteousness, as if that should command God to open the gates of righteousness, that they may enter in thereat. O vain men! be proud of your own folly, and wrap your selves up in your rags, and build as high a tower of duties as you can, and lay stone upon stone, duty upon duty, good work upon good work; the day is coming when God will justify this wisdom, and tumble you headlong, O ye self-justitaries, with all your righteousness into hell: your Tower of duties will be but a *Babel* of eternal confusion, and not one stone, nor one duty, shall be left upon another; that shall not be a very abomination of desolation.

2. We condemn wisdom, when we backslide from our professed Religion, abjure Christ in his truth; set up error instead of truth, or follow profaness and embrace the world in stead of holiness, and embracing Christ. Is not this a justifying of profaness, a justifying of error and of the world, and a condemning of Christ's Religion, truth and holiness? Now consider, 1. This is an upbraiding of Christ, as if he were not bountiful enough to engage the hearts of men to follow him; as if Great *Diana* of the *Ephesians* were far more excellent than the Lord, or the *Jews* Queen of Heaven were better than the blessed God of Heaven.

2. It is an upbraiding of his truth, as if the traditions of Scribes and Pharisees, the vain jinglings and disputes and errours of corrupt minds were better than the Oracles of God, and the Counsels of God displayed in his word in justifying the errours and traditions of men, what do we but condemn the Wisdom of God for foolishness it self? yea my Brethren! Backsliders do the greatest mischief in the world: they do not only condemn Christ and Religion themselves; but as the Scribes and Pharisees did suborn false witnesses to accuse him; So backsliders do suborn others to condemn Christ and Religion, they harden their hearts against Christ and his ways. There are many in hell perhaps, O Thou backslider, that curse thee for their condemnation, they had not spoken evil of Religion, nor condemned godliness as they did, had it not been for thy Apostacy.

3. We condemn Christ, when we will not suffer him to rule and reign over us as King and Lord; when we draw away our neck from the yoke of his holy and righteous Law. We put a Kingly Crown upon the head of Christ when we obey him, and suffer our whole man to be ruled by his Spirit according to his word: but disobedience is a deposing of Christ, a depriving him of his Kingly Crown. VVe will have no King but *Caesar*, said the wicked *Jews*, when *Pilate* condemned Christ to die; and profane men cry, we will have no King but our Lusts, or the Devil rather; our Lusts are his Law, our fulfilling them is subjection and obedience to him. Oh, how many are there that perform one part of obedience to God, and think that enough! If they have some shew of godliness, it is without justice and honesty, they have no care of their word and promise: if they

have honesty, it is without piety; they make no conscience of prayer in their closet, nor in their family, they can dispence with it a week, a month or two perhaps together: if they have any good desires and purposes, they come to nothing. Whence that saying, *There are more good purposes in Hell than in heaven*: not as framed there, but as carried thither for want of being effected upon earth. Are there not many that are superficially good, but really evil? *Abel* and *Cain*, both Sacrificed, and both to the same God: the Publican and the Pharisee, both did the same Act, they prayed, and in the same place, the Temple, and to the same Lord; yet was *Cain* rejected, and the Pharisee not justified, because, though they performed the same act, yet not with the same heart and will.

4. A scandalous profession of Religion, is a condemning of wisdom; a scandalous conversation gives not only a lie to our profession: but also it justifieth the foul aspersions which wicked men cast in the face of Religion, and the Professours of it. Strictness of Religion is termed by profane men hypocrisie. It is said of *David's* gross sins that he caused the enemies of God to blaspheme: thus doth every loose professour, he causeth the way of God to be evil spoken of, Religion is ill reported of for his sake. *Chrysostom* hath a comparison: *If an Oratour make an ill speech, or an Artificer a bad piece of work, Men will not condemn Rhetorick for his Duncery, nor Art for the Workmans want of skill.* But it is otherwise in Religion, if professours live ill, then men presently blame religion, as if that were the cause of lewdness. *Salvian, lib. 4.* brings in the heathen thus railing upon Christ for the wickedness of those that professed themselves to be Christians, *Sancta ab illis fi-*
rent,

rent, *ſi Sancta Chriſtus docuiſſet*. Lo, what manner of men they be that worſhip Chriſt: it is falſe that they have a good Law, as they ſay they have; for if their Maſter taught them well, they would live holily: if they learned good things, themſelves would be good: doubtleſs ſuch is the Sect, as are the Sectators and followers of it. A little after, he brings in the Pagans thus ſpeaking, *Vide Chriſtianos, &c.* Look upon the Chriſtians, ſee what they do, and by that you may eaſily know what Chriſt their Maſter teacheth them. By this we may collect, how ill the bad lives of Chriſtians made Pagans judge of the Chriſtian Religion, and by conſequent what a ſhadow the evil converſation of profeſſours may occaſionally caſt upon their profeſſion, though in it ſelf never ſo pure and glorious. So then when wicked men do blaſpheme God by reaſon of your flagitious and filthy lives, you deſame the Chriſtian name, and are the occaſion of their horrible blaſphemy. Moreover hereby you give the wicked occaſion to condemn all the godly; they are all ſo, is the worlds Logick: hereby alſo you block up the way, and keep off others from the profeſſion, hardning and juſtifying the wicked in their ſins.

5. Men condemn wiſdom, when they draw Arguments from outward bleſſings, that God approveth of their courſes, which his word condemneth. As Leah called her fifth ſon, *Iſſachar*, as a reward from God, for giving her maid to her husband, *Genes. 30. 18.* So theſe men take wealth and honour too kindly from God, abuſing both his patience and bounty, by looking upon them as a reward of their wickedneſs, and bleſs God for that for which they are indebted to the Devil. Thus when through coverouſneſs the ſhepherds of *Iſrael* made Merchandiſe of the flock of
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the slaughter, slaying them, yet not holding themselves guilty, they sold them, and said, *Blessed be the Lord for I am rich*, Zech. 11. 4, 5. As impious *Domitian* thought the gods favoured *Sacredge*, because he had such a good gale of wind and weather, after he had robbed their temples; so these men think God likes well enough of prosperous wickedness, because he doth not presently avenge it.

6. When men bear themselves upon their civil behaviour in opposition to religion, they condemn wisdom. It is pity so fine a thing (and in these days, so rare a thing) as Civility, should be so much abused, as we should have occasion to find fault with it. But by experience we find that even Civility (the counterfeite of grace) hath given occasion to profanels to rise up in arms against Religion. This is dangerous both to the Civil man himself, and to others. *To himself*, because he useth it as a strong fence to ward off religion: he justifieth himself; and condemneth true wisdom, because he seeth not that black outside in himself, which perhaps is visible in some professors of religion. And because he seemeth near to the Kingdom of God, he never careth to come to it, being like a parallel line, that keepeth a scantling with the way of wisdom, but never meeteth with it. It is dangerous *to others*, because (as one well noteth) he objecteth himself as a Paragon to the view of the world, to pull down the price of true wisdom. Thus as the *Egyptian* sorcerers by counterfeiting the miraculous works of God, hardened the heart of *Pharaoh*: so the meer civil man, by some resemblances of good actions without holiness, is an occasion that many do contemn true wisdom, and condemn the generation of Gods Children. These are the days wherein civil and moral

ral men do justify themselves, because though they be not really good, yet comparatively (and in their own eye especially) they are less evil than many professours. But proud Moralists are either ignorant of, or else they disdainfully overlook those choyce excellencies that are in the Children of Wisdom: and therefore if they are not Atheists in profession (which giveth a large scope to worldly wisdom) they encline to Popery, which puts on a garb of Ceremonious gravity, but never troubleth the Conscience with the power of true wisdom. Such a kind of religion as this, may make him carry the fruits of the land of promise upon a dry staff, as the Spies did, but never to bear them from a living root.

C H A P. X.

Now let us consider the aggravations of this sin of condemning wisdom any manner of way.

1 BY condemning the wisdom of God in Christ, you make the wisdom of God who is only wise, to be foolishness, as if you could have found out a better way then of Salvation by Jesus Christ. You vilifie the infinite merits, righteousness, and sufferings of Christ, an infinite Saviour; as if your prayers and negative holiness were of more merit than Christ: yea, you play *Pilate*, you set in judgement, and condemn Christ.

2. In condemning true wisdom and holiness, you condemn your own happiness; for holiness is the way to happiness, you condemn your life, your comforts, your grace, your glory, your redemption, your adoption, your own souls.

3. Ye

3. Ye that condemn Wisdom, you shall be condemned in your own Consciences: thus it was with Judas, and thus it was with Spira after he had been at Mafs, and read his abjuration of the truth, he thought he heard a direful voice speaking to him in these words; *Thou wicked wretch! Thou hast denied me; Thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy obediences, hast broken thy vow: hear Apostate, hear with thee the sentence of thine eternal damnation.* What was this but the dreadful voice of his accusing Conscience for denying Christ and condemning Wisdom? With what horrors, griefs, impenitency and despair are their souls filled that deny Christ and condemn religion, they are no other than men living in hell. What tongue can express the inward horrors of Judas for betraying Christ? What the High-priest said to him, the same did his conscience, did God say to him; so that out of a cursed envy of the condition of the damned, he hung himself. Oh! how doth God many times deny to such persons all hopes of mercy, all power to repent, to believe, that they might be recovered out of that sad condition? Thus Spira said of himself; *My heart now is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father, all good motions are quite gone; my heart is full of hatred and blasphemy against God; I grow more and more hardened in heart: I cannot believe, I cannot Repent, I cannot Hope.* At the time of their death, when in the anguish of their souls they shall call for mercy, pardon, and the salvation of their souls; mercy, pardon, and salvation shall be denied them.

4. Christ will not own them before his Father, who condemn Christ and his ways: though they should scrape acquaintance with him, Lord we have prayed, prophesied, and professed thy name, yet he will

will say to his Father. *Father I know them not*, Christ will neither know them, nor any of their religious Acts, nor acknowledge any thing they have done for him. As the Psalmist speaks of dead men, *They are forgotten, and out of mind, and their place shall be known no more*: so it is with such as shall condemn wisdom, and deny Christ, when they shall cry Lord, Lord, have we not done this? He will be ashamed of such as call him Lord, before his Father. *Chrysostome* on that place [*I know you not*] said, he had rather be stricken through with a thousand thunderbolts, than to hear Christ say, *I know you not*. Christ will not own any good work, or good duty of theirs, who have condemned or denied him and his ways; all their prayers shall be forgotten, as if they had never prayed; yea, all their duties shall but aggravate their torment: he will say to his Father, Give double torment to those that have condemned wisdom, and yet prayed to Thee in my name.

5. Christ will accuse them before his Father: These are the persons that would not feed me when I was hungry; that when I was thirsty, would give me no drink; that being a stranger, took me not in; that when I was naked, *Matt. 25.* clothed me not, that when I was *40, 41.* sick, and in prison, visited me not: these are the men, that did basely condemn my ways, and shamefully deny me before such and such men: This is *Judas*, that betrayed me into the hands of the *Jews*: These are the persons, that by their cowardise or covetousness betrayed my truth, my worship, my religion into the hands of sinners. Brethren! I know, you abhor *Judas* his fact, and would not for a world, stand in *Judas* his coat before God at the day of Judgement: Let me tell you, to betray the
truth

truth of Christ, to condemn true wisdom, will be reputed as great a sin in that day. Nay, Christ will not only accuse such, but he wil cast them out of his presence, and destroy them before the blessed presence of his father; he will cast them out from the presence and from communion with Angels and Saints into hell torments. Depart ye cursed of God and Christ, ye that condemned Religion, Depart ye cursed of Angels, and of your own Consciences into hell torments. What is that worm there that never dieth, but thy Conscience of denying and condemning Wisdom?

6. Consider the hainousness of the fact, what a sin it is to condemn Wisdom and Religion? In denying Wisdom, you deny Christ himself, in condemning Religion, you condemn him: It is his religion, his truth, his worship, his ways which you condemn; therefore in condemning these, you condemn Christ himself: You condemn him whom God the Father hath justified and glorified, and witnessed a good confession of him before men; *This is my well beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*: you condemn Christ whom all the Angels adore; it is their glory to be his Ministring Spirits: in condemning him, you condemn the infinite love of God; for, *so God loved the world, that he gave his son*: you deny the Lord of glory, the Prince of life, the King of Kings, the only Saviour: You reject the blood of Christ, his blood which is more worth than rocks of Pearl, than mountains of Gold, yea, more than if God had given an heaven full of Angels, or a world of Creatures for you. O what a great sin is it to condemn him who hath bought Thee with his own blood, who suffered the wrath of God for us, and purchased many glorious priviledges for us? To deny or disown a friend that hath been kind and bountifull, it is shame.

shameful; for a Child to deny his Father, it is unnatural: but for a man to deny or condemn Christ who died for him, condemn his redeemer and Saviour, it is worse than unnatural, if worse can be.

7. Look upon the goodness of wisdom, A man can have no better than God's truth to maintain, and to acknowledge the word of life and salvation: no outward means but the Gospel to bring us to Salvation: to condemn these, we condemn the means of salvation. The men of *Sodom* shall rise up in judgement against the men of *Bethsaida*, the men of *Niniveh* against the men of *Capernaum*, because they repented at the preaching of *Jonas*: the Bastards of *Babylon* shall rise up against the daughters of *Zion* in judgement; the Papists shall rise up in judgement against many Protestants, for they will not condemn nor betray the Cause of Anti-christ: but these men put Christ to open shame, and expose the wisdom of God to a world of contempt in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

C H A P. XI.

An use of exhortation to justify Wisdom.

Use 2. **B**E exhorted now my Brethren to justify Wisdom, thereby ye shall shew yourselves to be the Children of Wisdom: stand up in the defence of Christ and religion, be not ashamed of him, not of his Gospel, be ready and willing to suffer any thing for his sake if thou art called thereunto: rather die for him a thousand deaths, suffer a thousand torments rather than deny him once: if ever ye look to have Christ own you, to have his Father own you, and his holy Angels in all their glory to
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own you; then beware of condemning wisdom; plead for his truth, justify wisdom, relieve the members of Christ, boldly and freely testify what ye hold and believe in matters of religion, constantly affirm, this is Christ's Doctrine, this is Christ's Religion, this and none else is the pure worship of God in Christ: Witness a good Confession with your mouths, what ye believe in your hearts of Christ and his Doctrine. It is not an Arbitrary duty, but necessary. If an Arian should ask, what believest thou concerning Christ? Thou must answer, I believe him to be very God, though all the world were Arian: or if a Papist should ask Thee concerning Christ in the Sacrament? Thou shouldest answer, I believe He is not there bodily. Some think it enough, if they believe Christ's truth and Religion in their hearts; and as for outward affirmation and justification of it in plain words, it is rather superfluous, at least Arbitrary, not necessary. No: this is not sufficient; A man that believeth in his heart, his mouth must shew forth his faith. If he be persuaded in his heart, that this is truth, and that is truth he must testify it in his words. As the Apostles; they believed in heart, that Christ was the Messiah, was the Christ, and they did confess it with their tongues, *Thou art Christ the son of the living God*, This is Jesus, the God of glory, the Prince of life, whom the Jews slew, and hanged upon a tree. *S. Paul* did believe the Resurrection, and he did justify the Doctrine of the Resurrection before a whole Council, *Act. 23. 6*. Many account it a peice of singular Wisdom, either to silence, or to dissemble the truth; they had rather be accounted Wise and Wicked, than Simple and Religious: they had rather be esteemed as Neutral between Christ and Anti-christ, than

than openly to confess and justify him, *veritas si lum-
modo abscondi erubescit*; truth only is ashamed to be
hid: If you believe that Religion which you pro-
fess, you must be ready to justify it before all the
world. Be ready to speak for Christ upon all oc-
casions, to plead for his Gospel and Worship in all
places. Our Saviour, wheresoever he came, would
in all companies, in all places, upon all occasions
testifie himself to the people. All *Paul's* preaching
and writings were nothing else, but a confession and
testification of Christ. *S. Bernard* reckoneth the
name [*Jesus*] to be found five hundred times in *Paul's*
Epistles, as who could not speak of Christ suffici-
ently: his Tongue; his Pen; the Pulpit, the Prison,
the Bar, the Judgement-hall, preached Christ.

CHAP. XII.

Of the special seasons when we ought to justify Wisdom.

NOW let us consider the special times when we
ought to justify Wisdom.

1. When men shall attempt to draw us off from
Christ and his Religion, then must we justify wis-
dom. Had we *Balak* to offer as much to us as to
Balaam, an house full of Silver and Gold; or as the
Devil did to Christ, all the glory and riches of the
world, if he would but fall down and worship him;
so to us, if we will fall from Christ, our profession,
his truth and holiness: if then we answer from the
heart Crucified to these things, as *Balaam* did from
the tongue (his heart longing after the proffer) we
will not go beyond the word of the Lord for an
house full of Silver and Gold; this wonderfully justi-
fies wisdom. Such as justify Christ and Religion do
look upon these outward things with contempt and
scorn, when as men that condemn wisdom, look

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upon

upon them with admiration and affection, judging themselves men, if they can get these things below. When the Emperour *Valens* offered *Basil* great preferments, telling him what a man he might be, *Basil* answered, offer these things to children not to Christians; they are but bables in a Christian's esteem. So when some bade, stop *Luther's* mouth with preferment, one of his Adversaries answered, *Germana illa Bestia non curat aurum*, That German Beast careth not for Gold: his Spirit was too Divine and Heavenly to be tempted with Gold: Earthly hearts would soon have been taken with such offers.

2. When wisdom is vilified, and Religion is in disgrace, contempt or trouble; then for a man to stand for Christ and Religion, this is a time to justify wisdom: when the more disgrace is cast upon Religion, we burn with greater Zeal and love to Christ. *Shimei* and *Mephibosheth* were both tried in *David's* troubles: while *David* was in his prosperity, both honored him, but when *Absalom* rebell'd, and *David* was fain to flee for safety; yet then *Mephibosheth* sticks close to *David*, and *Shimei* shewed his false heart railing upon him. So long as Christ was working miracles, feeding the people miraculously with loaves, he was followed, and justified by them to be a Prophet, or *Elias*, or the *Messiah*: but when Christ was vilified before *Pilate*, and misused, then they condemned Christ, and cried out, Away with him, Crucifie him, Crucifie him. When Religion is at the lowest ebbe, clad with disgrace, trouble and contempt, th's is a time for a Christian to justify wisdom.

3. When the truth's of God are overborn with errors and Adversaries, then to stand for the truth of God is to justify wisdom. When we stand resolutely for the least truth of Christ as the Godly Bi

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shops, and other holy Martyr's did in *Quisquilie ve-*
 Queen Mary's days, that died (many *ritatis sunt pi-*
 of them) for truth's of a lesser size, *liosæ.*
 so dear was truth unto them. Herein the Children of
 Wisdom do resemble God, who prizeth the least
 rittle of his word, as dearer than heaven and earth. It
 was a noble resolution of *Shammah*, he would not suf-
 fer the Philistines to have so much as one piece of
 ground in the land of *Israel*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 11. A resolute
 Christian, that loveth truth, will not suffer the enemies
 of truth to get the least ground of truth; *uno absurdo*
dato, mille sequuntur, Let but one absurdity be granted, a
thousand will follow. The children of wisdom know but
 one Lord, one Faith, one Gospel in truth and indeed; if
 any other be obtruded, they reject it as spurious. Gold
 cannot endure the least quantity of Latten to be mix-
 ed with it, nor Silver of Tin: No more will truth en-
 dure the least mixture with any adulterous wares; nor
 will the children of wisdom take Alchymy for currant
 Coyn, although it bear the Stamp of the King's Im-
 age and Supercription. If once they discover this
 Stratagem of Satan; or any of his Ministers, they will
 not give place by Subjection (or admixtion) no nor
 for an hour, that the truth may abide with them. In
 this case it was that *S. Paul* (*Gal.* 2. 5.) withstood not
 only those of the Circumcision, but even the holy Ap-
 pottle *Peter*, and that to his face, who though free
 from error in Doctrine, yet gave offence by his pra-
 ctice in favour of the Jewish Ceremonies, and went
 not with a right foot according to the truth of the
 Gospel, but admitted those obsolete Rites to ap-
 proach too near it. A little chink in a ship may let in
 water enough to sink a Ship of a thousand Tun: so if
 heresie get in never so little within the Ship of the
 Church, it may soon sink it into the Sea of Error. If

Charles Martel, and *Pipin* his Son be admitted to flee with the Kings of *France*, they want but the Popes title, or a New coyn'd distinction to get an absolute Sovereignty: so the unsound Christian knows, if he can but introduce a companion that will prove a Rival, that in the end will thrust truth out of doors.

4. When Christ and Religion is forsaken by the greater multitude in the world, yea, within the verge of the Church, then is a time to justify wisdom. Religion in its purity is condemned by the most as humorous, factious, as a singular way. Now for a man to swim against the strong stream of the multitude, to walk in the way of Religion, though he walk alone without Company, this is a time to justify wisdom. Thus one *Elijah* justified God and his worship against a whole Kingdom of Idolaters: one *Micajah* against four hundred false Prophets: Christ and his Apostles withstood the whole *Jewish* Synagogue. VVhen the multitude go against Christ, he looketh that his Disciples should go against them: If the multitude be profane, they must be strict, and not live according to the course of the world. If the multitude of the *Jews* follow the traditions of the Elders, the Apostles must follow the Rule of Gods word. VVe are not to follow the multitude, but to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: the multitude leads to hell, Shall we follow them? It is for beasts to follow the herd, for an Hog to follow the herd of Swine, for an Ox to follow the drove. It is the poorest argument in the world to do as the most do: *Seneca* could say, *argumentum est turpissimum turba*, to plead you must do as the multitude do, is the basest Argument of all other. The multitude do resolve with *Hushai* (but for a worse purpose) to worship the rising Sun: and *Ab-salom* shall now be as much esteemed and honoured by them,

them, as ever *David* himself was, when at the highest :
 2 *Sam.* 16. 18. Of any Religion they are ready to say,
 as he of *Absalom*, whom all the men of *Israel* shall
 chuse (although with rejecting their true liege Lord)
 his will I be, and with him will I abide. It was a cou-
 ragious speech of *Luther*, being urged with the Au-
 thority of the Fathers in a point of controversie. *Quid*
si mille Augustini, mille Chrysostomi, mille Hieronymi hoc
asserant, Ego tamen veritatem loquar. What if a thousand
Augustines, a thousand *Chrysostoms*, a thousand *Hieroms*.
 do assert this or that, yet notwithstanding I will speak
 the truth. Godly men, like the wise men, will follow
 Christ, as they did the Star leading them to his place,
 their way is like the way of the Mari-
 ner, guided by the heavens, not by the
 course of the world, as *Seneca* speaks of
 a good man.

*Movere siderum
 mortalibus iter
 perficere, Senec.*

CHAP. XIII. SECT. I.

Singularity and private humour, is the brand that the
 world puts upon godliness, and upon godly men, to be singular
 and humorous : but I shall shew you, that neither godli-
 ness is singularity and humorousness, nor are godly men
 singular and humorous. Now to justify wisdom, when the
 world goes a contrary way, is neither singularity nor hu-
 mour : and here,

CONSIDER what the profane multitude calleth sin-
 gularity : because good men will not lie and
 swear as they do, carouse and drink as they do, and
 will not run with them to the same excess of riot,
 therefore profane ones call this strictness, preciseness,
 singularity. Profane persons are acted by the Devil,
 that wicked Spirit, that ruleth in the air, and in their
 hearts; and godly men are acted by the Spirit of God :
 Now because God's people are not led by the Devil as
 they are, into open profaness, or secret wickedness,

therefore they are accounted strict, singular, precise: because they follow the thing that is good, and not that which is evil, therefore they are singular. The very light of nature, and the morality of heathen men was bitter against the common course of the world: one of the *Pythagorean* sacred rules was, *per viam publicam ne ingredi*, *Trace not the common steps of the rude multitude*. Godly men chuse the green and clean way of wisdom, and will not walk in the fowl and dirty way of the world; is this singularity? How many are there who by following the evil examples of the men of the world, do come to be defiled therewith. VVe read *Genes. 30. 37.* How *Jacob* put himself into a breed of spotted sheep. He took rods of green Poplar, and of the hasel and chesnut-tree, and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods, and he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering trough's when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink when it was breeding time; and conceiving before the party-coloured rods, they brought forth party-coloured Lambs. Such be the examples of evil that we see in the multitude before us, they be like *Jacob's* party-coloured rods; and these examples lying in our eye do make us many times to do like them. Indeed the world is spotted, as *Jacob's* Lambs were spotted; there are both great and little spots to be seen upon it. You may look upon some that have great spots upon them, tainted with odious, and great sins; spots of adultery in their eyes, spots of drunkenness in their faces, spots of blasphemy upon their tongues, spots of blood and oppression in their hands; spots of pride and vanity upon their backs. A man that professeth any religion, would blush to have any of these spots seen upon him, There are also spots
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of a lesser size, such as are not so odious and foul as those be, yet the children of wisdom must keep themselves from these too, even from the least of them all. The common Religion is the Pharisees Religion; if there be no gross sin we can be accused of, we think all is well enough. There be a kind of Serpents that be called *Hemorrhoides*, of no great bigness, for they be not a foot long: yet if a man be stung with them, he bleeds at his ears, eyes, nose, mouth, gives not over-bleeding till he dies: such be the sins that the multitude count but little sins; yet as little as they be, they cost the shedding of Christ's blood; and they will cost us the best blood we have, unless we repent us of them the sooner. There be two main evils in those same little sins that we speak of. 1. Though they be little, they be many, what they want in weight, they make up in number; therefore saith S. Bernard, *Nemo contemnet quia parva, sed timeat quia plura*: No man will condemn them because they are little, but let him fear them, because they are many. 2. Those same little sins, they do always make way for greater: entertain one such evil Spirit, he will bring in seven with him worse than himself.

S E C T. II.

II. **C**ONSIDER, that godly men are to be a peculiar People, and they ought to be separate from the course of this world. There ought to be an endeavour after the same gradual distance between a godly mans course and the course of the world, as between the life of Angels and of Devils. That phrase of the Apostle is remarkable, *A peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. A godly man must be a fiery zealot for holiness, for strictness according to Gods word, and must be Zealous against all manner of sin, and the course and vanities of this present evil world,

he remembreth the exhortation that speaks to him and all Christians, as unto Children: *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if any praise, to think on these things, that is, so to think of them, as to do them*: he labor-
 'Arey 'Aps- eth in all good things to be best, and to in-
 SEUSIV. corporate τὸ ἀεὶον, into every branch of his calling and practice, that he may be found, (if not in name, yet) indeed, an *Aristarchus*; an *Aristobulus*, the best Governour, the best Counsellour, the best Neighbour, the best Christian. He that striveth to have his name among the thirty of *David's* worthies, must labour to be one of *the first three*, or else he may be excluded the Catalogue of *the thirty*, 1 Sam. 23. The Zealous man is like *John*, who in running to Christ's Sepulchre, out-ran *Peter*, he esteemeth himself nothing, if he strive not to keep pace with the best, or at least to follow them in view, when he cannot keep Company with them. What an unreasonable thing is it to call a man for strictness, singular or humorous? it is as if a man should call a rich Diamond or precious stone, a vile base stone; because it is singular and better than a whole heap of Peble-stones; or count gold to be but vile mettall, because it is not so base as dung; Whereas one Pearl is worth a thousand Pebles. It is a Noble Speech of *Cyprian* in one of his Epistles: *Ne attendas numerum illorum; melior est unus timens Deum, quam mille impii.* Do not thou regard the number of the wicked, Better is one man that feareth God, than a thousand wicked Persons, God's Children are compared unto Jewels, the wicked unto dross; Jewels are not common, a man may see thousands of Pebles before he can see a Rich Diamond;

mond; you can go no where almost, but you may see swarms of drunkards, multitudes of swearers, vile persons even as common as Pebles, but how rare a thing is it to find a godly man among thousands of men! *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, Jer. 5. 1.* A just and upright man is a rare jewel, hardly to be found. Hence the whole Company of Believers, are named a little flock, the whole Company of those that shall be saved, are said to be very few.

S E C T. III.

III. **I**T is no singularity to follow Christ, who is the Captain of our Salvation: Souldiers that break their Rank, are the disorderly and singular men, not those that trace the steps of their leader. Godly men do trace Christ step by step, though not *passibus aequis*, and are fearful to break their Ranks. The wicked Rout are rather disorderly and singular men, that will not follow Christ, whom they acknowledge to be the Captain of their Salvation: he chuseth the clean and pure way, but they like not of it. Godly men do follow a multitude; therefore holiness cannot be termed singularity. They have the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, all the Saints of God before them, Clouds of witnesses, many thousands of them, and every one of them is worth ten thousand of others. Yea, and if those high examples of all those glorious worthies be too low for them to follow, they will propound to themselves an higher example than all the former, even Jesus himself, the Authour and finisher of their Faith. Hence, as one observeth, in Scripture are propounded to us the examples, not only of wicked Heathens, which we must avoid, and of Pharisees

Pharisees and Publicans, whom we must exceed, but of the most holy and perfect Saints, to whom we must strive to come up as close as we can: yea, the Lord not only sets before his Children, his Elect Angels that did not erre, and his most accomplished servants on Earth, but even the Lord Jesus himself, who did not erre, and God our Father who cannot erre, that no Servant of his may set down to himself any scantling in holiness. Now is this singularity, when one poor Godly man shall have so many high and eminent examples before him.

There is but one way to heaven, beaten with the feet of Christ and all his Saints, holiness is that only way, and that way is but a narrow way, therefore strictness in a man's course is very necessary: as the Mariners at Sea have but one North-star to steer their courses by to their appointed haven, is it singularity then to sail by that Star? let me demand of you that condemn godly men of singularity, because they justify wisdom and Christ in the purity of Religion: if Christ should come personally to you, and ask this question of you, will you follow me whithersoever I go? there is no doubt but you would answer him, yes verily; and we are ready to follow thee. Certainly, the way that he would shew you, is this way of holiness, which you do now condemn for singularity and preciseness in the Children of Wisdom. Then follow Christ prosperously with an undaunted resolution, and in an holy derision laugh at the false judgement of the world, crying godliness down for singularity. Do as *S. Paul* did, when the *Corinthians* censured his plain preaching, *with me it is but a small matter to be judged by you*: it is less for godly men to be judged by the world: your life of holiness doth as far exceed the natural capacities of wicked and ungodly men, as their reason exceed-

exceedeth the Imagination of Beasts, Behold therefore O ye Children of Wisdom, and justify Wisdom.

S E C T. IV.

IV. **T**HAT cannot be singularity, as long as it is according to the publique Rule of every man's conversation, and this is the pure word of God, the Rule of pure Religion binding every one to obedience, both in judgement and practice: so that though all the world lie and live in darkness, and refuse to have the word of God to be a lantern to their feet, and a light unto their paths, yet if there be any one godly man, that takes the word of God to be a Lantern to his steps, and holds it close to his feet, to guide him in his course, he is not to be condemned for a singular man, though he followeth not the examples of the multitude which erre from the word. To work, and walk by a General Rule, is no singularity, though but one man in many thousands do so: Examples of multitudes of men cannot satisfy conscience: it is only the right Rule that must direct and satisfy the conscience. What our Divines hold against the Papists, and some of the Papists with them in matter of judgement, is true of practice: That one private godly man is more to be believed and followed in his judgement than the Pope and a General Council, if he hath better reasons and the Scriptures on his side: one private man may be Orthodox, sound in judgement, When the Pope and his whole Council may be Heretodox and erroneous: as it was in the days of *Athanasius*, when the whole world was infected with *Arianism*, he only was Orthodox; the same may be said of practice and conversation; that man is to be followed, that liveth according to the Rule of the word, though we see millions of men to go another way: he that hath the Scriptures for the foundation of his judgement and practice,

practice, cannot be a singular man; such a one maketh both the will and Commandment of God, his ground, and rule of obedience, he doth it because God requireth it, and as he will have it to be done, he will look to his warrant, as well as to the work that is done by him. But the profane multitude steer another course, they are like self-will'd Servants, that must have their own will and way, or else will do nothing; or do it so, that it were better they had done nothing, thus under colour of obeying God, they obey their own wills. If others (like themselves) prescribe them a course of obedience, and a fear towards God after the precepts of men, here they will be very forward. *Blind obedience and a blind faith*, are the two paths in which they walk; they fear not the ditch, till they have fallen headlong into it. Historians have observed, that none have been so great innovators in matter of Religion, as Usurpers of the Civil Power, nor have any been so great oppressours of the people in Civil affairs, as those who intrench most upon the Divine Majesty in the things of God, and none have been more willingly obeyed than the greatest oppressours: *for the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house Ahab*, Micah 6. 16. *Omri* (who had been General, and was after made King of *Israel*, in the camp, to be revenged on *Zimri* that slew his Master) did worse than all the Kings that were before him; and afterwards *Ahab* his Son, did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. These besides the golden Calves of *Jeroboam*, worshipped *Baal*, in which Idolatry the people readily trod in the steps of their Leaders, (although to their own destruction) having now a liberty granted them to adore which of those Idols they pleased.

S E C T. V.

V. **T**hat pure Religion and strictness of conversation cannot be proud, humorous singularity, let them that say so, be Judges themselves. Take wicked profane loose men that scoff at holiness, and condemn holy men, let them I say be taken, when they are most serious, when they are best able to judge of things: Do not take wicked men, when they are in their passion, when their lusts are stirring, when they are in health, when they are in a calm mood: but take them when they are sick, when they apprehend themselves going down to the Chambers of death, and going to appear before the great Judge at his Tribunal, take them then when Conscience is like to speak truth to them, and mark such men at such times, what they then wish and heartily desire, and what in their Consciences they then most approve of: Oh! then the most Swinish drunkard, the greatest scoffer at Religion and purity will be on the godly man's side, and could wish it were with them, as it is with one such a poor godly man, whom they derided for a proud, humorous, factious, singular animal: then conscience sets up a consistory for Christ, and furnisheth all things requisite to true judgement, and being rightly instructed, tells him more than seven watchmen that sit in an high tower, and will be sure to give in a true verdict, *Eccles. 37. 14*. Therefore according to the judgement even of wicked men themselves, when they are most themselves, and best able to judge, it cannot be an humour of singularity, that acteth the godly man in the way of holiness against thousands of profane persons: such would never approve of holiness then, if they thought it were singularity.

C H A P. XIV.

Now let us consider the reasons why godly men had need to be singular against the multitude, in purity of Religion and Conversation.

1. **B**Ecause the example of the multitude is dangerous and fallible, the Pope and his Council, the Devil and his adherents. Most men do erre from God and his ways; most people run post to hell; the way of the multitude is the broad way, and the end of that way is destruction; the world walketh in darkness, and at the end of their walk is the place of outer darkness; therefore there is no safety to do as the most do, to follow a multitude to do evil: it will be no comfort to any one to be damned with the multitude. Most men are yielding men, carried away by every word and wind, they consider not what is fit and warrantable to be done; if they see others do so, if they be pressed by others to do so, they presently yield. The multitude are for any Faith, or Religion; yea, for any practice that others will perswade them to; especially if plausible, or such as carries not abhorrency in its forehead: they count it their wisdom and their glory, to do as their Company doth, and to be as they are: any fashion, behaviour, action, faction, course, or custom, except what is truly good, will suite well with the disposition of the most.

2. Because this strict, or (to use the worlds phrase) the singular way, is one of the best evidences of a man's election to eternal life: Gods people are a very small number in compar son of the multitude, a very little flock in respect of the Goats. The going against the multitude, the following Christ in strictness, argues a man to belong to that very little flock, because few do so, and most go in the broad way. Then again it is said; the way is narrow, and the gate
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is strait that leads unto life, and few there be that enter in therat: a pure, strict, precise, holy conversation, is this narrow way. There are many by-ways, but one right way: as in shooting a man may miss diversly, either by shooting under, over, or wide, on this side, or on that, but one way to hit the mark: the Covetous with his great bags, the ambitious with his high looks, the drunkard with his full Cups cannot enter in at the strait Gate.

3. Because every step of a mans life is either to Heaven or to hell, and every action is a drawing a man neerer heaven or hell; the world thinketh not so; they imagine not how fast they are posting to one of those two places, but godly men know it, and therefore they will have a main care of the steps of their conversation, though the world be careless, and little mind it, till they are dropping into hell; the godly will be careful of the smallest matters that concern their souls, like thrifty worldlings, that will not lose the least opportunity of the smallest gain, but will lay hold upon it, if the least profit present it self to them; to covet the best gifts, and to be greedy after grace is not blame-worthy, but a desirable blessing; and ambition to be above, and to get beyond others in Spiritual advancements, whereby God may more delight in us (so the heart be not puffed up) is not a blemish, but an honour; here is no fear of a *minimus* (as one saith) where no care is enough.

4. Because a godly man worketh for Eternity, therefore he worketh by God's Divine Eternal Rule, not by the examples of most men. All the conditions of man in this life are for Eternity, every act of sin is for Eternity; every holy action is for Eternity, therefore it concerneth men to take heed to their ways: the multitude thinks not so. *Apelles* being asked why he

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was so curious in painting, and spent so much time about a piece of work, answered, *Ego Aeternitati Pingo*, I paint to Eternity: men will judge of my Painting (said he) an hundred years after I am dead. A godly man will give Thee the like answer, Thou wonderest at my strictness and frequency in holy duties: Oh! I work to Eternity, I preach, I hear, I pray for Eternity, I live for Eternity; my actions shall be judged many years after my death: did you frequently and seriously think, that all your actions are to Eternity, how strict, how holy, how zealous, how singular would you be.

C H A P. XV.

Use **H**OW should this encourage the fearful, and put heat and life into our dead frozen spirits, to justify wisdom, to be bold for Christ in his cause, and not to be dismayed for the threats and revilings of men; but justify wisdom and confess Christ, come what will: doth the world and do carnal friends suggest a thousand fears, a thousand troubles and dangers to thee, be not dismayed for all these. Tell Soul-diers of Pillaging and Plundering of Rich Spoil, they regard not the difficulties of war, they are not startled at cold, hunger, thirst, nakedness, wounds, death, but slight all for hopes of great spoils, Put on O Christians with the like courage in Christs cause; you have as ample a reward promised as heart can wish, and God is faithful who will surely give it to you.

Consider this, all ye that confess Christ now, and justify wisdom, that Christ will confess and own you before men: it was an honour to John Baptist, when Christ justified him before men, *Mat. 11. 9, 10, 11.* What went ye out to see? A Prophet? Yea I say unto you, and more than a Prophet: for this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my Messenger before thy face, which shall prepare

prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. What if the world now condemn you for a company of fools, Christ will one day justify you to be the true Children of wisdom, and damn the wise generation of Carnal men for meer Ideots: yea, they that now condemn you, shall then justify you; then will they say, we fools count them wise; we accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour: but now they are numbred among the Children of God, *Sap. 5.* and their Lot among the Saints, therefore *4, 5, 6, 7.* have we erred from the way of truth and the light of Righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the Sun of Righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied our selves in the way of wickedness and destruction, &c.

Moreover, Christ will own those that have stood for him, as his Members, Friends, Subjects, Servants, as they have acknowledged him to be their God; Lord, King, Matter, and will present them to his Father: These are the Children, the faithful Servants whom Thou hast given me. It were great honour if a Prince should take a man by the hand, and before the King, and all his people should acknowledge him to be his faithful Servant: So it will be a very heaven to be acknowledged by Christ at the last day. Christ will testifie before his Father and the holy Angels, what they have done for him, what they have suffered for him. Father, behold these men that stand here before thee, have suffered reproaches for my Name-sake, they were hated, reviled, persecuted, put to death for my sake. When many thousands shamefully denied me, and cowardly deserted my opposed cause, and my persecuted Religion, These men stood
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close to me, esteeming the reproaches, hatred, imprisonments, cruelties of the world for my sake, greater riches than all the honours, preferments, treasures of all the Kingdoms of the earth; and joyfully suffered all, rather than my name should suffer. As he will testify what they have suffered, so likewise what they have done for Christ. These men fed me when I was hungry, gave me drink when I was thirsty, clothed me when I was naked, visited me when I was sick and in prison: O ye my blessed Angels, Behold them, and rejoyce over them, and bid them welcome into their heavenly Mansions. The giving of a cup of cold water to a Disciple shall then be acknowledged, how much more the giving away of thy estate, thy liberty, and the laying down thy life for Christ's sake.

Christ will also before Angels, Saints, Devils, and wicked men, and the whole world, declare them the Blessed of his Father, and glorify them with the same glory, wherewith he is glorified.

1. He will declare them Blessed: *Come ye Blessed my Father.* Those that justify and confess Christ in an evil time, are looked upon by an evil and adulterous generation, as unhappy, lost, miserable and undone men, as the dross and off-scouring of the world: Christ will then declare them to be the only happy and blessed men, Come ye blessed, blessed of God my Father, Blessed of me your Saviour, Blessed of all my holy Angels. Blessed of all that are blessed: yea, so highly blessed, that all the wicked themselves shall then envy at your blessedness: ye were before blessed in the promise, but now ye shall be blessed in the fruition; you shall see the full accomplishment of the word and promise of God.

2. Then will he glorify them with his own glory.
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Come ye, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you: heaven was made for you, all heavens glory was prepared for you: This glory, this happiness, these Mansions, These Everlasting habitations were prepared for you: my Throne and Kingdom is yours, you shall sit down with me upon my Throne; my inheritance is yours, ye are joynt heirs with me, you and I will divide the heavenly inheritance between us; ye are fellow-kings with me, you and I shall be happy, glorious, and rejoyce together as long as eternity lasteth.

Finally Christ will justify them before their Enemies, who now load them, and the way of Christ with all the base calumnies, their malicious hearts can imagine, and their tongues can vent. They condemn the generation of such as justify wisdom, as factious, humourists, as rebellious, and enemies to *Cesar*, though God's faithful Servants, and *Cesar's* loyal Subjects. The wicked make the godly unworthy to live; so they are to be among a crooked generation: they likewise condemn religion in power, as hypocrisie and indiscretion; Now the Lord will justify them before their enemies. Know ye O mine Enemies, ye Children of *Belial*, that these are my faithful Servants, they are my dear Children, they did but what I commanded them; that which you termed hypocrisie in them was the pure religion; and what you counted rashness and indiscretion in them, was true Zeal and heavenly wisdom. Then will Christ avenge them of their Enemies before their faces, he will damn the revilers, scoffers, and opposers of his people, before their faces, and will cover those with shame and confusion, that did put his people to open shame for their justifying of wisdom, and for their confessing of his Name, and their sincere profession of Religion; and the shame and confusion of their enemies will make the glory of the Children

of wisdom the more splendent and conspicuous.

Now the Saints are judged, censured, and condemned by the world, Now they are reproached and vilified by the world; but there is a time coming when the despised Saints shall sit upon throns, and judge Angels, and the whole world. All ye that now scoff at the godly, ye shall on that day tremble before them: you that now despise them in your heart, shall then lie and even lick up the dust of their feet. Christ will put such glory on all his Saints, that the world shall admire at Christ in so doing, *2 Thess. 1. 10.* When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe, Oh! then, how will the wicked cry out, Behold, how God doth honour and glorifie yonder men, whom once we derided and daily mocked for their preciseness! What glorious and blessed creatures are they become! Oh, that our heads were as high as their heels! How are they Crowned with glory, and we cloathed with shame; they have Crowns of righteousness and immortality about their heads, and we have chains of everlasting darkness about our heels!

Some have put this question, whether the wicked shall then know the godly with whom they have lived upon earth. Some answer, It is more then probable, that the children of *Belial* shall then know the children of wisdom, with whom they lived, whom they reproached, mocked, scoffed, condemned for their holiness. This very man whom I despised; lo, how he is glorified? Oh, what a difference is there now between me and him; He is a glorious King, and I a condemned Prisoner for evermore. But it is overmuch boldness to assert, that the wicked shall have a particular knowledge of those very godly men, whose persons they had in derision for their holiness, seeing it is
enough

enough to their great confusion, to behold the whole army of glorified Saints in the Kingdom of heaven, and their own consciences shall then witness to them; that these were the Children of wisdom that justified wisdom; that these were the righteous Servants of God, and themselves were wicked, and such as were the Servants of sin and Satan: Yet it is not denied, but their personal knowledge of the very men whom they did despise and condemn for their godliness, would much conduce to the greater confusion of the children of disobedience. That speech of *Chrysologus* is considerable, *Dives magis uritur Lazari gloria, quam proprio incendio*, The rich man is more tormented with beholding the glory of *Lazarus* in heaven, than with the sense of his own burning in hell. This will aggravate the torment of the damned, when they shall behold the transcendent glory of those very particular persons whom they vilified, and had in derision. But let us leave this question to the decision of the Great-day.

C H A P. XVI.

NOW to conclude, let me excite all the Children of Wisdom to live by faith, then will you justify wisdom in the worst of times; the futurity of your glorious reward requireth a continued acting of faith, lest you draw back your hands from the plough, and your hearts off from the ways of Wisdom; for be sure, He or they, who resolve to justify wisdom, must expect to meet with high discouragements, nothing can swallow up these discouragements, but faith acted and exercised, which (like *Moses's Rod*) easily devoureth all these *Egyptian Serpents*. The world will discourage you from serving God, Oh, pity thy self, said *Peter* to Christ; so the world to thee, Pity thy ease, thy

thy liberty, thy estate, thy pleasures, thy honour. Your worldly callings will hinder you from walking in the paths of Wisdom; you will lose your time, your profit, if you spend so much time in religious duties. All the wicked in the world will discourage you by their taunts and contempt. What needs so much praying and hearing? Lo, we are set up and thrive in the world, who do not as you do; your very senses will discourage you from the Service of God: you see and hear that no profit is gotten by serving God, you see how they who serve not God, grow rich and great in the world. All within you, and all without you will endeavour to pull you back from Wisdom's gates. Wherefore you have great need to act faith continually, faith must be a continual evidence to you of things not seen, then will it cry to you, Do you not see heaven, the crown, the kingdom, the glory which is set before you? See you not Christ condemning and putting to open shame and destruction, all such as deny and condemn true Wisdom? Unless faith be thus acted, and you walk from day to day by faith, you will never be faithful to the death. It is faith acted, which maketh a man (as *Chrysostom* said of *Job*) a man of Adamant, a man of Flint, a man invincible, not to be moved. There is nothing more stirreth men up to diligence in Gods service, then the belief and expectation of a glorious reward. Every man propoundeth to himself in all his undertakings, *Quid habebō?* What shall I have? All the world, godly men, wicked men. *Judas* said, When he was betraying Christ, *What will you give me?* What shall we have, said *Peter* to Christ, because we have left all and followed thee? Wherefore when men see no likelihood of rewards, and do not believe there is any, they despise to do service. Unbelief is the root of all profaneness;
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men of no Faith are men of no Religion; their neglect of Prayer, hearing the Word, and other Pious Exercises, are evident tokens of their unbelief that God cannot or will not reward them, or rather that God is not. It is the most monstrous contradiction in the world to believe there is a God and not to serve him, to believe the rules and precepts of Wisdom and not to justify it, to believe there is an heaven for a reward and not to seek it. It is men's unbelief that makes men have the Servants of God in contempt, and to make a scorn of them, and to count them fools and madmen for their holiness. They do not for the present believe that the godly are the Sons of God, heirs of heaven, and shall be Kings of Glorious State; hereafter they will wish they had lived their lives, whom they poured scorn and contempt upon. It is men's unbelief that is the root of Apostacy from the paths of Wisdom, they march over into the tents of Devil, and fight under his banner, run from Christ and his Service to embrace this present evil world, because they see no present good, profit nor happiness in serving God.

F I N I S.